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DEPT FOR AF A/S FRAZER, SE WILLIAMSON, AF/SPG  
NSC FOR PITTMAN AND HUDSON  
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU  
DEPT PLS PASS USAID FOR AFR/SUDAN

SENSITIVE  
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SUBJECT: MINNAWI KICKS OUT DETRACTOR FROM SLM/MM AND JUSTIFIES HIS RETURN

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: On October 24, SLM/MM chairman Minni Minnawi presided over a party meeting announcing that the membership of its Secretary General Mustafa Tirab has been suspended. Effective immediately, Ali Hussein Dausa will replace Tirab, who has long been accused of working for the NCP. Prior to the announcement, Dausa, Yassir Arman (the SPLM's Deputy Secretary General for the Northern Sector,) and Minnawi offered their remarks. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (SBU) On October 24, SLM/MM held a party meeting at its Omdurman headquarters. Minnawi's one-dozen bodyguards, approximately 150 party members and dozens of print and television journalists attended the event. Political officers from the U.K. and U.S. were the only representatives of the diplomatic community. A trumpeter, drum player, and a group of ululating women (who promptly stole the microphone from the master of ceremony and loudly chanted praise for SLM) ushered Minnawi into the gathering. Minnawi's bodyguards helped restore order and retrieved the microphone. The first speaker, SLM/MM South Darfur representative, Muahmmad Hamid, led the gathering in a moment of silence "to remember the martyrs of the Sudan Liberation Movement."

#### REMARKS FROM THE NEW SECRETARY GENERAL

¶3. (SBU) Ali Hussien Dausa (who was later appointed the new acting Secretary General of SLM/MM) then gave a review of implementation of the Darfur Peace Agreement since the September 19 meeting between Vice President Ali Osman Taha and Minnawi. Dausa said that in particular SLM/MM and the NCP have made progress on security arrangements, formalizing the DPA in the interim constitution, and increasing SLM/MM participation in the civil service. Dausa noticeably referred to SLM/MM's matrix of 27 items under discussion with the NCP. (Note: This document was sent to AF/SPG and the Office of the Special Envoy in early October. End Note.)

#### DPA IMPLEMENTATION IN THE LAST MONTH

¶4. (SBU) Dausa noted two points outside the scope of the matrix. First, he recounted that a representative from the Ministry of Education promised SLM representatives that school fees for Darfuri university students would be waived and that rogue school administrators still requesting fees would be dealt with harshly. Second, Dausa specifically noted that Haj Atta Al-Mannan (former Governor of South Darfur and a leader of the Sudan People's Initiative) visited SLM/MM wounded war veterans in Khartoum and promised medical support for those individuals- "a positive symbolic gesture that demonstrated the goodwill of the NCP."

#### SUDAN PEOPLE'S INITIATIVE

¶5. (SBU) Dausa ended his remarks saying that the Sudan People's Initiative is a positive first step, and that SLM should contribute to the debate on a number of the still unresolved issues. The Sudan Liberation Movement has had a clear position on the need for

individual compensation to those affected by the war, claimed Dausa.

(Note: This call for individual compensation conflicts with the TDRA's Compensation Chairman, Abulgasim, who previously told poloffs that collective compensation will provide more systematic and long-term aid to the people of Darfur. End Note.) On the issue of turning Darfur into one region, SLM/MM has made it clear that "we are for one region, but the people, not politicians, should be able to choose in a referendum."

#### SPLM'S STRATEGIC ALLIANCE WITH SLM/MM

16. (SBU) SPLM Deputy Secretary General for Northern Sector, Yassir Arman, gave a very brief presentation welcoming Minnawi's return, the recent steps toward implementation of the DPA, and a future "strategic alliance with SLM/MM." Arman noted SPLM's long history with SLM, and his personal relationship with Minnawi. Arman noted that the Sudan People's Initiative (SPI) is a positive first step for the government to listen to the political opposition and the people of Darfur. The leaders of the SPI should give other opportunities to meet for those who did not participate in the first session, said Arman. Arman said that the Qatari initiative should include a prominent role for neighboring countries, the international community, and the African Union.

#### MINNAWI'S REMARKS

17. (SBU) Minnawi opened his lengthy remarks saying that he would like to "use this opportunity to clarify some developments within his movement." He then thanked those within SLM who persevered and remained loyal to the movement, while the "doubters and detractors exploited my absence from Khartoum." Minnawi then specifically

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acknowledged the contribution of Darfuri students, the SPLA, women, IDPs and refugees, and "of course the SLA fighters, our heroes." Minnawi claimed that more than 300 SLA fighters have been killed in combat since the signing of the DPA in 2006.

"NOT EVERYTHING IS OKAY."

18. (SBU) The NCP and SLM/MM have made progress in DPA implementation in the last month, stated Minnawi, but he also cautioned "just because I am talking to you here in Khartoum does not mean that everything is okay." Minnawi said that funding remains a major outstanding issue for the Darfur Reconstruction and Development Fund, and "if this is not implemented, I will go back to my soldiers." Minnawi noted that security in Darfur has improved since his meeting with VP Taha in El-Fasher. Minnawi implied that the GoS was ready to sign an agreement after being thoroughly routed by SLM/MM fighters near Colgay in early September. "They were going to test our forces. But we all know what happened in places like Colgay and they were forced to look at other options," noted Minnawi. Minnawi stated that although things have been relatively stable in SLM/MM areas of control, that the overall situation for Darfur's people is "dangerous." Minnawi emphasized that Darfur should not be characterized as an ethnic conflict, as "at its heart it is a political issue."

19. (SBU) Minnawi only indirectly referred to division in SLM/MM. He said that it was inappropriate for some detractors in his movement to criticize his leadership while he was in Darfur. He then emphasized that SLM/MM is ready to build a new movement for the people of Darfur.

#### RELATIONSHIP WITH NON-SIGNATORIES

10. (SBU) Minnawi said that his current relationship with the NCP is "not bad" and that the DPA must be the basis for any serious negotiations about Darfur. Indirectly referring to his travel to Chad, Minnawi stated, "there are not restrictions against a partner in the government traveling to meet one's neighbors." Minnawi then said that he met anec/th~p/QodkmOuocused on Minnawi's comments regarding his relationship with non-signatories. End Note). Coincidentally, CDA Fernandez spoke several hours earlier with former JEM rebel commander Bahar Abu Garda, who has forged a relationship with Minnawi.

BYE BYE TIRAB

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¶11. (SBU) SLM/MM's spokesman Sayf Al-Din Haroun ended the meeting reading SLM Presidential Decree number five in 2008. The decree cites ongoing violations of the General Secretary dating from August 2007, and declares that Mustafa Tirab's participation in the movement is immediately "frozen" and that Ali Hussein Dausa will serve as the acting General Secretary, ending the meeting.

¶12. (SBU) Following the meeting, Sayf Al-Din Haroun separately told poloff that Minnawi plans on remaining in Khartoum "at least for the next week." When asked why the decree did not deal with other SLM/MM detractors such as Deputy Chairman Dr. Rayyah Mahmud or Suliman Dayia, Haroun replied, "Minni believes that he will be able to work with these individuals without kicking them out of the movement, but Tirab was their leader and we had to deal with him." SLM/MM Legal Secretary Abd Al-Aziz Sam also later told poloff that although Tirab's participation in the party has been suspended, it is not clear whether Tirab will continue to work in his government position as the State Minister of Federal Rule. Sam said that SLM/MM is still exploring how to remove from Tirab from this position.

#### TIRAB'S PERSPECTIVE

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¶13. (SBU) On October 25, Mustafa Tirab told poloff that he rejects SLM/MM's decision as the movement did not follow standard party procedures. Tirab said that this move will lead to "chaos" in the party and denied allegations that he has ties to the NCP, as "I was in the movement before Minni and have always been true to it." Tirab asserted that SLM fighters in the field are loyal to him and "we have our own men to fight, so why should we care what Minni does?"

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#### COMMENT

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¶14. (SBU) Tirab's suspension has been anticipated for some time and there is nothing altogether surprising from this move. The removal of only one SLM/MM detractor will likely have little effect on the movement, and Minnawi will likely have to be even more aggressive in dealing with other detractors in the coming months. Despite Minnawi's occasional jab at the NCP, the October 24 meeting appeared to be more about justifying his return to Khartoum than ejecting Tirab. Many SLM/MM members believe that the little progress that has been achieved in DPA implementation (e.g. the formality of bringing the DPA into the constitution or promising civil service jobs) does not justify Minnawi's return to Khartoum. The evening was an awkward mixture of celebration, internal party management, and political posturing. Above all else, it showed that SLM/MM has much work to do to transform itself from a raggedy rebel movement into a legitimate Darfuri political party.

FERNANDEZ